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REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS OF THE SIXTH UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CARTOGRAPHIC CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

(Secretariat)

1. Since the third United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa, the Commission has reported to the Conference the way it implemented resolutions and recommendations of the previous Conferences. Reports on the implementation of resolutions focused on those aspects referred to the Executive Secretary for action. Some Conference resolutions call upon member States or organizations to implement specific aspects of a resolution and these in most cases are not reported upon by representatives as expected. In fact several resolutions from the past six Conferences were not implemented in their original form, but often they came up again in other forms. A point in case is the recommendation of the first cartographic symposium organized by the OAU/Scientific, Technical and Research Commission at Cairo in 1974 calling upon member States to support the Regional Centre for Training in Aerial1/ Surveys (RECTAS) and to make full use of training facilities at that Centre. A similar recommendation was made by the fourth Conference in resolution 5. These resolutions (and many related ones) as they had not been fully implemented, necessitated the Lagos Plan of Action to include the idea among its strategies for economic development (LPA Chapter III para. (iii)). Even with all these efforts, the Centre remains lacking in membership.

2. As a result, it will be pertinent for the Conference to propose effective ways to bring about reasonable commitment on the part of member States and organizations to implement conference resolutions and declarations so as to render cartography and remote sensing viable in Africa's development process.

3. The present report provides a brief account of measures taken to implement recommendations or resolutions referred to the ECA for action or on the role it played where joint execution of projects or programmes was called for.

4. Regarding implementation of substantive resolutions of the sixth Conference, Resolution 1(V) operative paragraph 1, the ECA gave support to the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS) in conducting a Conference of Ministers responsible for surveying, mapping and remote sensing in the Eastern and Southern African Sub-region just a few weeks before the sixth Conference, to sensitize the Ministers on the role of cartography and remote sensing to planning and development. A similar conference was held at Dakar in February 1989 on the occasion of the launching of RECTAS second five-year development plan (1988-1992).

1/ Aerial changed to Aerospace in 1987.

5. Resolution 3(VI) sought to establish a subsidiary organ of the ECA that will look after cartography and remote sensing matters in the same way as other existing subsidiary organs take care of sectoral issues relating to the development of the continent. The discipline of surveying, mapping including remote sensing is fundamental to all development activities that it should receive pre-eminence leading to the establishment of a subsidiary organ in the form of Conference of African Ministers responsible for Cartography and Remote Sensing. Its annual meetings will be organized and servised by the Natural Resources Division which will act as its Secretariat. This is the only way in which the Science of Cartography and Remote Sensing Technology will be able to receive worthwhile recognition among the various measures being taken for development of the African economies.

6. Resolution 5(VI) on the evaluation of training needs and manpower requirements in cartography and remote sensing requested the ECA to provide adequate funds for the exercise. It directed further that the report on the findings should be submitted to the member States within a period of one year after the approval of the report of the Sixth Conference. The Conference is being informed that the approval of the report by the Conference of Ministers does not automatically provide funds. Since the report was endorsed after the 1986-1987 programme of work and budget had been approved by the General Assembly, it was not possible to provide funds for this activity in the regular budgetary resources. Moreover, efforts to obtain extrabudgetary funding was fruitless. Therefore resolutions 5(VI) and 10(VI) of the sixth and fifth Conferences on this issue respectively could not be fully implemented.

7. Resolution 6(VI) of the sixth Conference concerns the strengthening of existing regional centres and the co-ordination of fellowships awards. It is gratifying to report that the Regional Remote Sensing Centre at Ouagadougou and RECTAS at Ile-Ife, Nigeria and RCSSMRS at Nairobi are fully operational and provide training and user assistance services needed by most African countries. These services are under-utilized and the resolution appeals to all African countries to become participating members so as to ensure growth in quality and variety of services. The Executive Secretary continued to seek financial support for the Centres and chair the meetings of the Governing Council of the Nairobi and Ile-Ife based Regional Centres.

8. With regard to the co-ordination of fellowship, the ECA administered ten fellowships per Africans (with preference to candidates from least-developed countries in Africa) provided

by the government of Brazil under the South-South co-operation. These fellowships covered areas of remote sensing applications at graduate level. The course lasted nine months ending in April 1988. The Brazilian generous award was also in response to the appeal in resolution 7(VI) for manpower development under technical co-operation. ECA organized a seminar and study tour in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at Moscow and Minsk in 1987. The programme was designed for senior African government officials and institution managers of cartography and remote sensing projects. It exposed them to modern mapping techniques and the role of cartography and remote sensing in planning and implementing development projects. Nomination of participants respected the principle of equitable geographical distribution among all sub-regions and African regional training institutions. ECA still experiences difficulties to learn in time of planned awards by external donors to African institutions so as to play its co-ordinating role effectively as requested. It is hoped more governments of developed countries will in the future co-operate in this regard.

9. It will be recalled that the Lagos Plan of Action laid down strategies for developing cartography and remote sensing through creating mechanisms for achieving self-sufficiency in qualified manpower and recommended recognition of the discipline as socio-economic development a sine qua non for the LPA urged action to establish national cartographic institutions where they do not exist, also where their infrastructures are in place, to include them among national priorities in the allocations of resources. The sixth Conference heard the presentation of the Chadian delegation which culminated in the adoption of resolution 8(VI).

10. At the time of writing this report, four missions have been fielded to Chad to appraise the needs in this regard. The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the United Nations in New York conducted a comprehensive mission to N'Djamena. It is hoped that through DTCD United Nations may assist in building up cartography and remote sensing services as it had done in some other countries both within and outside Africa. Responding to the same call, the Government of Tunisia sent a mission to Chad in 1987 and some proposals were made. The Tunisian delegation might wish to report on the government's endeavours to assist the government of Chad in establishing a viable Department that will respond to its geographic information needs for development. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa, conducted two missions to N'Djamena concerning the appraisal of national cartographic and remote sensing capabilities and manpower requirements. Conclusions drawn from findings of the ECA mission came out more strongly in support of any appeal for assistance to Chad to develop its cartographic services as a major contribution to its efforts to recover quickly from the events of the past and to embark on developmental activities.

11. ECA is actively looking for sources of funding as well as rendering support to other initiatives by governments or institutions efforts intended to assist in the full implementation of this important resolution.

12. Resolution 9(VI) requested the ECA to work in close co-operation with any government or institution that offers to publish a specimen map utilizing the adopted specifications and symbols and to send copies of the specimen to the member States. The secretariat is happy to report that it received the necessary co-operation from the government of the Royal Kingdom of Morocco and the Direction de la Conservation Foncière et des Travaux Topographique (DCFTT) and the Secretary-General of the then African Association of Cartography (AAC). Considering the limitations in equipment and other technical facilities at the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS), it was not possible to repeat the exercise for variety's sake. The final product of the mock-up map published by DFTT, ECA and AAC, in which the ECA and AAC participated in its technical design is commendable. Some delegations might wish to report on actions taken by their respective institutions in complying with recommendations particularly operative paragraphs 3 and 7 of the resolution.

13. With regard to a further request for ECA to convene a meeting of experts within the period of 12 months after the endorsement of the report of the sixth Conference for the purpose of standardizing specifications at other topographic map scales: it is regretted that ECA efforts to cause the revision of the already approved ECA programme and budget of this sub-sections were not successful. However, this element has been incorporated in the proposed work programme for the 1990-1991 biennium and the medium-term plan 1992-1997).

14. The preamble of resolution 11(V) on the African gravity standardization network recalled resolutions adopted by several international groups and steps being taken to bring about an integrated continental gravity network for Africa. The resolution requested ECA and OAU to mobilize resources towards the implementation of the regional programme which aims at integrating the continental gravity network. Up to this time, ECA has not succeeded in obtaining funds for the support of the programme. Efforts are continuing to mobilize resources. ECA reiterates its preparedeness to continue co-operating with the Commission for Geodesy in Africa and other working groups in developing proposals for external funding. In the work programme for 1990-1991 in the field of cartography and remote sensing, ECA's backstopping role to workshops to be convened within the framework of implementing this resolution is well provided for.

15. Concerning resolution 12(VI) on African Technical Review, the Conference reviewed the call for the second United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa to publish a six-monthly bulletin. It requested all African countries to contribute materials and for the then AAC to collect and select suitable articles which ECA would edit and then jointly publish with the AAC. For the purpose of this report, the project has not been realized for various reasons. The review will soon see the light of day as a result of recent discussions between the substantive office of the ECA secretariat and the Secretary-General of the AOCRS. The full co-operation of professionals in the field of cartography and remote sensing in their various capacities including contributions from outside Africa will be greatly appreciated in this regard.

16. The Executive Secretary presented the report of the Sixth Conference to the ECA Conference of Ministers for approval and was subsequently endorsed by the Ministers in their resolution 602 (XXII) (Annex I) on Development of Cartography and Remote Sensing services in Africa.

17. As reported in the preceding paragraphs, the resolutions and recommendations of the sixth Conference were endorsed by the ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 602 (XXII) adopted in April 1987 (see Annex I). In accordance with resolutions 477 (XVIII), 515 (XIX), and 569 (XX) the Excutive Secretary effected the merger of the African Association of Cartography and the African Remote Sensing Council into the newly established African Organization for Cartography. The headquarters of the organization is located in Algiers, the Democratic Republic of Algeria.

18. The adoption of resolution 602 (XXII) enabled the Executive Secretary to revise the work programme for the biennium 1988-1989 and 1990-1991 and to accommodate new elements requested by the sixth Conference in the next medium term plan.

19. Earlier, mention was made of the seminar and study tour in the USSR. The seminar recommended among others (document E/ECA/NRD/CART/114):

1. bringing together national cartographic and remote sensing services under one administration;

2. that the ECA secretariat should ensure co-ordination among different linguistic divisions in Africa; and that funds should be provided for ECA to participate in the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names so as to ensure better organization of the African linguistic front.

20. This report covers ECA's activities in implementing these recommendations, decisions and resolutions referred to it for follow-up action and execution. There are a number of others which were referred to member States, non-African governments and the Organization of African Unity for implementation. It is hoped that accounts of their activities will be rendered in the course of considering this report.

Resolution 602(XXII) Development of cartography and remote sensing services in Africa

The Conference of Ministers,

Having considered the report of the sixth United nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa,held in Addis Ababa from 10 to 17 November 1986 and the resolutions contained therein,

Mindful of the close affinity between cartography and remote sensing and the need for their integration and strengthening in order that the composite disciplines may be in the position to provide member States with essential geographic information, scientific data and maps needed for the development of their national economies,

Noting that there is great need to increase awareness of cartography and remote sensing as tools for the development of natural resources, control of desertification and protection of the environment so as to contribute valuable inputs into the measures for the rapid implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos as well as Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery(APPER) and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD),

Bearing in mind that United Nations Regional Cartographic Conferences for Africa provide the unique forum for discussing modern trends in the development of cartography and remote sensing for the rapid production of information and data for economic planning, and offer an invaluable opportunity for the exchange and cross-fertilization of ideas between African experts on the one hand and between them and their foreign counterparts on the other,

1. Endorses the report of the sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa and the resolutions contained therein;

2. Requests the Executive Secretary to convene the seventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa in 1989;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary to take appropriate measures towards the effective establishment of the African organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing on the basis of the agreement reached between the African Remote Sensing Council and the African Association of Cartography at their joint meeting held in Kinshasa, Zaire, from 9 to 14 March 1987 and to submit a progress report to the Conference at its fourteenth meeting in 1988;

4. Urges the Executive Secretary to continue to sustain his efforts towards:

(a) Better co-ordination of institutional cartographic and remote sensing activities in so far as they concern the attainment of standardized specifications for topographical maps in Africa and the establishment of a common geodetic datum for Africa;

(b) Supporting Africa's regional efforts to establish an African Standardization Gravity Net (ASGN) and a common geodetic datum for Africa;

(c) Taking measures to promote the science and technology of cartography and remote sensing through the organization of seminars and workshops on topics relevant to Africa's economic development for the dissemination of information on the region's activities in these fields to the member States;

5. Urges all member States to apply the Standardized Specifications for Africa (SSA) as endorsed by the sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa and to ensure that topographical maps series at the scale of 1:50,000 published for their territories after 1988 conform to the SSA specification.